

Remarks

In the Office Action mailed January 26, 2005, the Examiner found the response of October 17, 2004 to be not fully responsive to the Office Action of September 9, 2004 for the reasons set forth therein. In particular the Examiner found claims 7-13 and 14-19 to be different from claims 1-6. The Applicant's present response is responsive since the Applicant is withdrawing claims 7-19 and revising the claims to include claims 1-6, which were elected under the Response to the Restriction Requirement of October 30, 2001.

The current claims were previously presented on July 14, 2003 and claim 1 is currently amended. This listing of claims should not be construed as any form of estoppel, disclaimer, forfeiture, or relinquishment of subject matter.

In addition, in the Office Action mailed February 4, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sun et al (US 6124391) in view of Dahmen et al (US 5409771). The Examiner states the instant claims 1-6 are directed to a product, in particular the claimed water sorptive product. Amended claim 1 specifically states "A water sorptive product comprising wet-laid web of a superabsorbent polymer and fiber..". As will be set forth below, neither the Sun et al nor the Dahmen et al teach a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of a superabsorbent polymer, and when combined do not teach a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of a superabsorbent polymer and fiber.

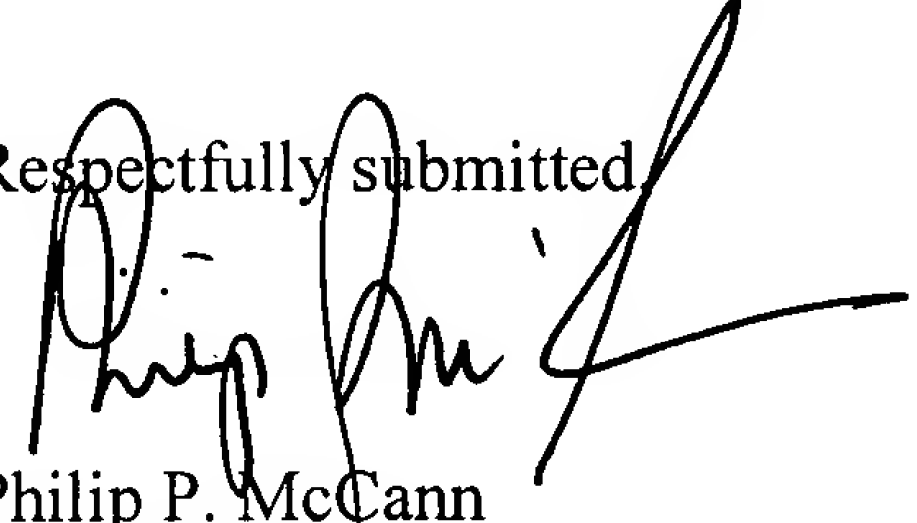
The present invention is directed towards a wet-laid web of superabsorbent polymer (SAP) and fiber wherein the superabsorbent polymer is partially neutralized by neutralizing the polymer after mixing the polymer with the fiber during the wet-laid process of making a web, wherein the degree of neutralization of the SAP is partial, preferably less than about 80 mol %.

As discussed on page 4, lines 3-17, of the application, a wet-laid web of a SAP and fiber may be formed by: (1) mixing a SAP with fiber; or (2) mixing a polymer, which is not a SAP but is capable of becoming one upon neutralization, with fiber and then *in situ* neutralizing the polymer to convert it into a SAP.

Sun et al. does not teach or suggest a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of a superabsorbent polymer and fiber. The term wet-laid is not used or suggested in Sun et al to describe the product thereof. Column 7, lines 49 to 65 does not disclose or suggest a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of a superabsorbent polymer and fiber. Likewise, Dahmen et al does not disclose or teach a water sorptive product comprising a wet-laid web of a superabsorbent polymer and fiber. The term wet-laid is not used or suggested in Dahmen et al.

Since this response is responsive to communications from the Examiner on Non-Compliant matters, and a RCE was filed on May 4, 2005, the applicant awaits the initial examination of the RCE. In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, allowance of claims 1-6 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,


Philip P. McCann
Registration No. 30,919

Smith Moore LLP
P.O. Box 21927
Greensboro, NC 27420
(336) 378-5302

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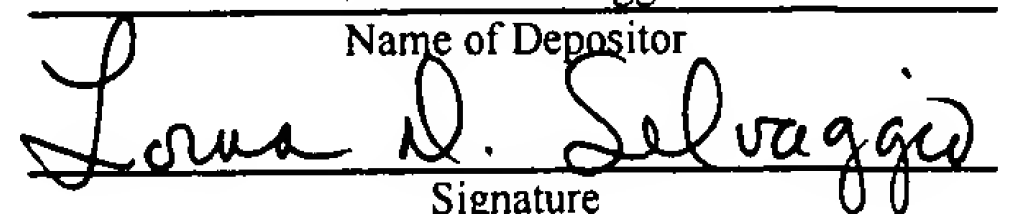
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